

NEW AND INTERESTING BUTTERFLY RECORDS (LEPIDOPTERA) FROM ISLANDS OF THE TORRES STRAIT, QUEENSLAND

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Abstract

Zizula hylax dampierensis Rothschild is newly recorded from Dauan I. and *Catopyrops ancyra mysia* (Waterhouse & Lyell) and *Hypochrysops elgneri elgneri* (Waterhouse & Lyell) are newly recorded from Saibai I. A fourth female of *Nothodanis schaefferi caesi*us (Grose-Smith) is reported from Murray I. and notes are included on the immature stages of *Hypolimn*as *antelope* (Cramer) from Murray I. and *Arhopala philander gander* Evans from Saibai I.

Introduction

The authors travelled throughout the Torres Strait in northern Queensland during the period 5-24 April 2001, visiting Thursday, Murray, Darnley, Saibai and Dauan Islands, and again during the period 25 April to 2 May 2002, visiting Thursday, Saibai and Dauan Islands. As a result, several new and interesting records of butterflies were made. Identifications were done using the reference works of Braby (2000) and Parsons (1998), plus material in the Australian National Insect Collection (ANIC), Canberra. Voucher specimens are deposited in the authors' collections.

Murray Island, 6-10 April 2001

NYMPHALIDAE

*Hypolimn*as *antelope* (Cramer)

Adults were common on Murray Island in early April. Males were encountered perching on high vantage points, head downwards, along roadsides, tracks and clearings throughout the island and displayed strong territorial behaviour, attacking any intruder before returning to perch on the same or adjacent vantage point. Females were encountered less frequently and were often found perched on or around *Pipturus argenteus* (Urticaceae), a known food plant for this butterfly in Papua New Guinea (Parsons 1998).

A single worn female placed in filtered sunlight in a plastic bag with cuttings of *P. argenteus* deposited an estimated 200-250 eggs (Fig. 1). The eggs and fresh cuttings were then transferred to an airtight container. The eggs were very small, less than 0.5 mm in diameter, round and yellow in colour. All hatched in 5-6 days. First instar larvae fed on the cuttings during the first day but later crawled off the plant and died. This may indicate that either *Pipturus* cuttings are somehow toxic to young larvae or the rearing conditions were unsuitable, or this may not be the host plant in the Torres Strait. The larvae showed no interest in cuttings of *Asystasia* sp. (Acanthaceae), placed in the

same container as the *Pipturus. Asystasia* spp. are known food plants for many other species of *Hypolimnias* Hübner in Australia (Braby 2000).

LYCAENIDAE

Nothodanis schaefferi caesius (Grose-Smith)

A single female was taken on Murray Island in the company of *Nacaduba cyanea manto* (Grose-Smith & Kirby), flying in dappled sunlight under the rainforest canopy. Four females have now been recorded from the island, with the other three collected in April 1989 by T.A. Lambkin and A.I. Knight (Lambkin and Knight 1990, Braby 2000). Interestingly, a male has yet to be collected from the island.

Dauan Island, 13-19 April 2001

LYCAENIDAE

Zizula hylax dampierensis Rothschild

Two males taken on Dauan Island, flying in a grassy glade adjacent to a small rainwater channel, represent the first record of this species from the island. Another male was collected in the same area during the subsequent visit in 2002. Within Australian limits, Braby (2000) recorded *Z. hylax attenuata* (T.P. Lucas) from as far north as Prince of Wales Island. Parsons (1998) recorded *Z. h. dampierensis* throughout mainland Papua New Guinea and on most outlying islands, including Daru I., Western Province. Daru I. is approximately 80 km NE of Dauan I., whereas Prince of Wales I. is some 140 km SSW of Dauan I. Specimens of *Zizula hylax* (Fabricius) from Dauan I. are a deeper purple on the upperside than are specimens from mainland Australia and they are therefore tentatively placed with subspecies *Z. h. dampierensis*, due to the closer proximity of Daru I. to Dauan I.

Saibai Island, 19-20 April 2001

LYCAENIDAE

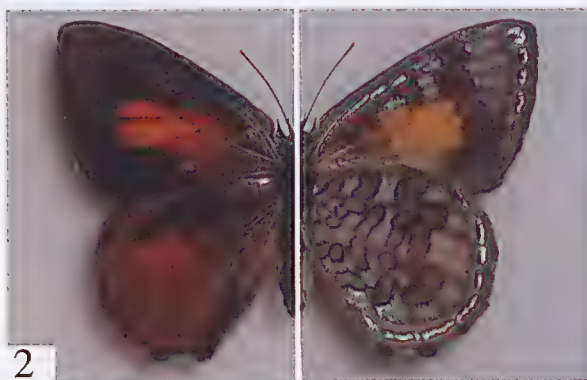
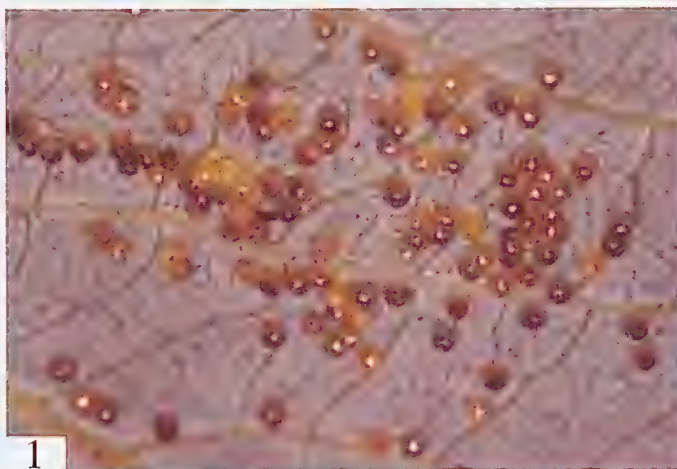
Catapyrops ancyrus mysia (Waterhouse & Lyell)

Three pairs were taken flying on the verge of vine thicket near the cemetery on Saibai Island. This butterfly has been recorded previously from nearby Dauan I. (T.A. Lambkin pers. comm.), so it was not surprising to encounter it on Saibai I.

Arhopala philander gander Evans

The identity of this species, formerly listed as *Arhopala* sp. Saibai (e.g. Braby 2000), was resolved by Lambkin and Knight (2005). A mature larva was found on the inside of one of our netbags (CEM), following an unsuccessful attempt to net an adult perched among *Hibiscus tiliaceus* (Malvaceae) on Saibai Island. The larva did not appear to accept *H. tiliaceus*, *Terminalia catappa* (Combretaceae) or *Calophyllum inophyllum* (Clusiaceae) as a host plant, because there was no evidence of feeding scars on any of the cut plants

provided in the container during the week after capture and prior to pupation on 26 April 2001. A female emerged in Canberra 24 days later, on 20 May 2001. The final instar larva was 25 mm long, with its markings and structure resembling other *Arhopala* Boisduval larvae in the *centaurus* group in Australia. However, it was principally orange in colour. The pupa was black, differing from other *Arhopala* pupae in the group, which tend to be translucent green in colour (Parsons 1998, Braby 2000, authors pers. obs.). Pupal length was 19 mm, width 7.5 mm. Neither Lambkin and Knight (2005) nor Parsons (1998) provided any life history details for this species.



Figs 1-2. (1) *Hypolimnias antilope* eggs on *Pipturis argenteus* from Murray Island. (2) *Hypochrysops elgneri elgneri* female from Saibai Island: upper and undersides (forewing length 19 mm).

Saibai Island, 25 April 2002**LYCAENIDAE***Hypochrysops elgneri elgneri* (Waterhouse & Lyell)

A single female (Fig. 2) was collected adjacent to mangroves on Saibai Island shortly before sunset. In colouration it appears midway between *H. e. elgneri* from Papua New Guinea (Parsons 1998) and *H. e. barnardi* Waterhouse from northern Queensland (Braby 2000). Sands and Fenner (1978) recorded *H. e. elgneri* for the first time from Papua New Guinea from localities in Central and Western provinces, and noted that both sexes collected close to Port Moresby were very similar to those from Prince of Wales I., the type locality for *H. e. elgneri*. On the upperside of the Saibai I. specimen, the orange-brown central area of the forewing is dark and reduced, as in *H. e. elgneri*, and on the underside the markings are well delineated and bold, as in *H. e. barnardi* from Iron Range, Cape York Peninsula. An examination of specimens (in ANIC) from Prince of Wales I. indicated that the Saibai I. specimen fits best with *H. e. elgneri*, although it is smaller than specimens from Rouku (Western Province, Papua New Guinea) in the Brandt Collection (ANIC).

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